



# **Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities**

**James Spengler, Director**

**October 2021**



# RPCA's Mission

## Mission

We enrich the City of Alexandria by creating meaningful experiences through public space, cultural activities, and programming.

## Vision

We will improve the well-being of every person in our community by connecting them to each other and their environment.



# RPCA By the Numbers

- 35,000 Street Trees
- 1,000 Acres of Open Space
- 233 Community Garden Plots
- 62 Marina Boat Slips
- 60 Tennis/Basketball Courts
- 49 Athletic Fields
- 41 Playgrounds
- 20 Miles of Trails
- 18 Dog Parks
- 12 Picnic Areas
- 10 Recreation Centers
- 4 Swimming Pools
- 1 Nature Center
- 1 Art Center





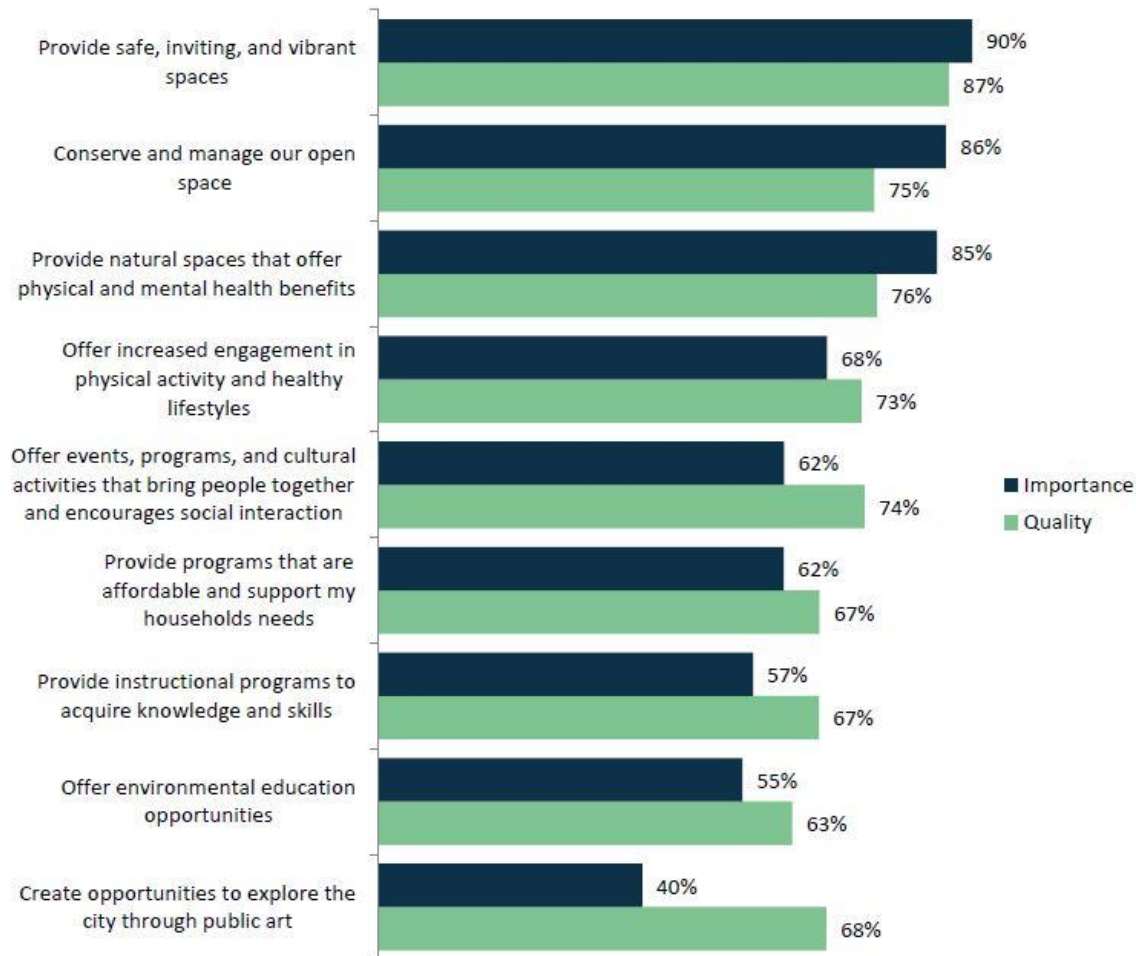


# Analysis and Metrics

- RPCA Needs Assessment
  - Why does RPCA conducts a needs assessment?
  - What does RPCA do with the information collected from the Needs Assessment?

# 2019 RPCA Needs Assessment

Figure 7: Importance and Quality of RPCA Goals

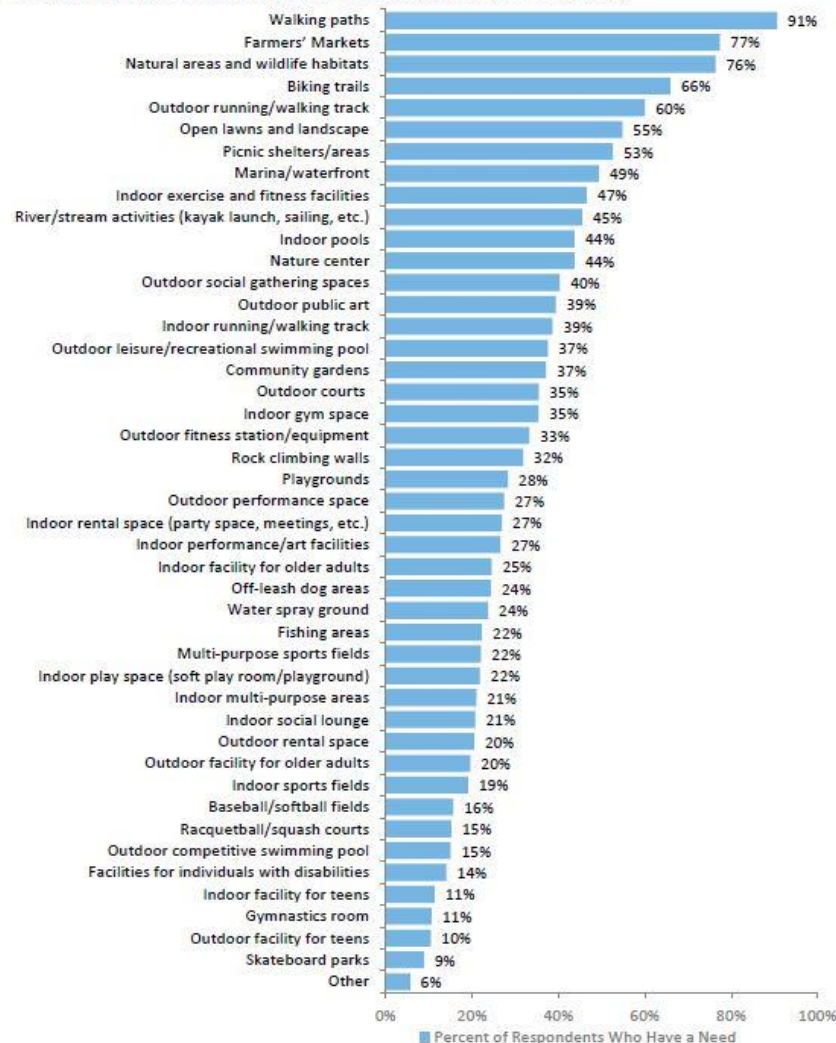


Percent of Respondents Ratings Goals as Very Important and Job the Department is Doing in Meeting Thses Goals as Excellent or Good

# 2019 RPCA Needs Assessment

Figure 12: Facilities for Which Alexandria Households Have a Need

Please indicate if you or any members of your HOUSEHOLD have a need for each of the parks, recreation, or cultural facilities listed below by circling the YES or NO next to the facility. (Percent of households with the need.)



# 2019 RPCA Needs Assessment

Figure 15: Importance-Unmet Needs Matrix for Facilities

Lower Priorities Lower importance/higher unmet need	Top Priorities Higher importance/higher unmet need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water spray ground, 3%, 46%</li> <li>• Outdoor fitness station/equipment, 2%, 49%</li> <li>• Racquetball/squash courts, 2%, 46%</li> <li>• Outdoor leisure/recreational swimming pool, 2%, 45%</li> <li>• Indoor multi-purpose areas, 2%, 44%</li> <li>• Indoor gym space, 2%, 44%</li> <li>• Indoor rental space (party space, meetings, etc.), 2%, 44%</li> <li>• Indoor play space (soft play room/playground), 2%, 43%</li> <li>• Indoor facility for teens, 2%, 43%</li> <li>• Indoor social lounge, 1%, 55%</li> <li>• Outdoor facility for older adults, 1%, 54%</li> <li>• Outdoor competitive swimming pool, 1%, 52%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indoor pools, 9%, 46%</li> <li>• Indoor exercise and fitness facilities, 9%, 45%</li> <li>• Rock climbing walls, 7%, 70%</li> <li>• Outdoor public art, 7%, 45%</li> <li>• River/stream activities (kayak launch, sailing, etc.), 6%, 51%</li> <li>• Nature center, 6%, 44%</li> <li>• Indoor running/walking track, 4%, 64%</li> <li>• Community gardens, 4%, 58%</li> <li>• Fishing areas, 4%, 56%</li> <li>• Indoor facility for older adults, 4%, 53%</li> </ul>
Lowest Priorities Lower importance/lower unmet need	Continued Emphasis Higher importance/lower unmet need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor performance space, 3%, 40%</li> <li>• Baseball/softball fields, 3%, 31%</li> <li>• Facilities for individuals with disabilities, 2%, 42%</li> <li>• Indoor sports fields, 1%, 42%</li> <li>• Gymnastics room, 1%, 41%</li> <li>• Indoor performance/art facilities, 1%, 41%</li> <li>• Outdoor rental space, 0%, 40%</li> <li>• Outdoor facility for teens, 0%, 37%</li> <li>• Skateboard parks, 0%, 37%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking paths, 36%, 25%</li> <li>• Biking trails, 22%, 29%</li> <li>• Farmers' Markets, 21%, 25%</li> <li>• Natural areas and wildlife habitats, 18%, 33%</li> <li>• Outdoor running/walking track, 11%, 35%</li> <li>• Open lawns and landscape, 9%, 30%</li> <li>• Outdoor social gathering spaces, 8%, 37%</li> <li>• Picnic shelters/areas, 8%, 34%</li> <li>• Off-leash dog areas, 7%, 39%</li> <li>• Outdoor courts (Tennis, Basketball, Multi-purpose, etc.), 7%, 33%</li> <li>• Marina/waterfront, 7%, 24%</li> <li>• Playgrounds, 6%, 25%</li> <li>• Multi-purpose sports fields (soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, etc.), 4%, 37%</li> </ul>



# 2019 RPCA Needs Assessment

## 2019 Results:

- The programs of higher importance with higher unmet need included:
  1. Volunteer/community projects
  2. Adult continuing education programs
  3. Adult creative and performing arts
  4. Adult nature programs/environmental education
  5. Walking/biking groups
- The facilities of higher importance with higher unmet need included:
  1. Indoor pools
  2. Indoor exercise and fitness facilities
  3. Rock climbing walls
  4. Outdoor public art
  5. River/stream activities (kayak launch, sailing, etc.)

# Guiding documents in the City

- **Open Space Plan**
- **Small Area Plans**
- **Park Improvement Plans**
  - Citywide Parks Improvement Plan
  - Neighborhood Parks Improvement Plan
  - Pocket Parks Improvement Plan
  - Natural Resource Areas, Shared Use, Destination/Historical, Regional, Corridors/Linear Parks/Trailways
- **Landscape Guidelines**



# Strategic Plan Focus Areas

## **Connect the Community**

Our parks and facilities are the public's common ground that equitably bring together our vibrant and diverse community.

## **Improve Well-Being**

Our programs and facilities motivate the community to make healthy choices and live active lifestyles through all stages of life and abilities

## **Invest in our Natural Environment**

Our commitment to natural spaces provides physical, mental, and community benefits, while offering opportunities to engage and conserve our natural resources.

## **Support a Responsible and Engaged Workforce**

Our workforce embodies RPCA's values and makes us a trusted and valued resource.

# Connect the Community

- Engage with all sectors of the population and other City Departments.
- Create environments and programs that encourage social interaction in safe settings.
- Create environments and programs that encourage social interaction in safe settings.





# Connect the Community

- Produce events, programs, and cultural activities that bring people together and create enduring memories.
- Explore and generate dialogue about the City and within the community through public art.
- Evolve partnership opportunities & foster relationship building.



# Improve Well-Being

- Increase engagement in physical activity & healthy lifestyles to improve health
- Provide affordable programs that support family stability, security, and community connections
- Enrich the community through lifelong learning opportunities
- Create environments that expose people to the visual and performing arts



# Invest in our Natural Environment

- Conserve and manage our open spaces
- Preserve and expand a healthy urban tree canopy
- Provide environmental engagement opportunities for the community
- Reduce our impact on the environment in our workforce and the community





# Support a Responsible and Engaged Workforce

- Our workforce embodies RPCA's values and makes us a trusted and valued resource





# RPCA & COVID-19



# Maintaining Essential Services

- Compliance with all Federal, State, and Local health guidelines
- Appropriate signage at all parks and facilities throughout COVID-19
- Ongoing park and open space maintenance
- Shift to virtual and on-demand programs



# Expanding Services to Meet Community Need

- E-learning at recreation centers
- Childcare for essential workers
- Homeless shelters
- Food delivery services/ pantries
- Showers for the homeless
- Park ambassadors



# Upgrading Facilities

- Maintain appropriate signage
- Install plexiglass shields in high traffic areas
- Limit number of staff on site
- Temperature checks for people entering the building
- Hand sanitizer is provided at all entrances/other critical areas and refilled as needed
- Handwashing will be promoted
- High touch areas cleaned and sanitized regularly
- Water fountains are out of service





# 3 Ways to Get Involved

## Commissions and Councils:

- Park and Recreation Commission
- Commission for the Arts
- Beautification Commission
- Waterfront Commission
- George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee
- Recreation Center Advisory Councils
- Youth Sports Advisory Council
- Therapeutic Recreation Advisory Council



# How to Get Involved?

## Provide Feedback:

- Biennial Needs Assessment
- Seasonal Program Evaluation
- On-going Experience Survey
- Periodic Planning Surveys:
  - Pocket Parks, Program Interest, Playground Manual, etc.)

## PARKnerships

- Volunteer
- Partnerships
- Adopt-a-Park
- Adopt-a-Bench
- Community Matching Fund





# Contact Us

## **Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities**

1108 Jefferson Street

Alexandria, VA 22314

703.746.4343

**Web:** [alexandriava.gov/Recreation](http://alexandriava.gov/Recreation)

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/RPCAAlexandriaVA](https://facebook.com/RPCAAlexandriaVA)

**Twitter:** @RPCA\_AlexVA

**Arts Instagram:** @AlexArtsOffice